WISDOM LIGHT

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VISWANATH MANDIR

Besides the routine daily worship at the Viswanath Mandir, situated at Sivanandanagar, Rishikesh, special worship with Abhishek and Archan are also offered here, and Mahamrityunjaya Japa and Havan performed for the health, longevity, peace, prosperity, as well as for recovery from disease, of many devotees, on request.

Special ceremonial worship is offered on appropriate occasions. From time to time, Atirudra Abhishek and Havan are performed for general welfare and peace in the world, when Mahatmas and Daridranarayanas are fed.

The Temple also holds prayer for the peace of the departed souls, on request by their relatives. Some devotees conduct daily worship on their personal behalf, while some others offer worship only on special occasions.

Annual membership fee of the Divine Life Society,

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PRACTICE OF MEDITATION

(Sri Swami Sivananda)

Meditation is an unbroken flow of thought of the object on which one meditates. Meditation follows concentration. Concentration merges in meditation. Meditation is the seventh step in the ladder of Yoga. Concentration, meditation and superconsciousness are the last three stages in Raja Yoga. When you practise concentration and meditation, you are aiming at the attainment of a state of superconsciousness in which you have union with God. Meditation is freeing the mind from all thoughts of sense-objects. The mind should dwell on God alone during meditation.

BENEFITS OF MEDITATION

If you meditate for half an hour daily, you will be able to face the routine of life with peace and spiritual strength. Meditation kills all pain, suffering and sorrow. Meditation is the most powerful mental, nervine tonic. Divine energy freely flows into the aspirant during meditation, and exercises a benign, soothing influence on his mind, nerves, sense-organs and body. Meditation is the mystic ladder which takes the Yogic student from physical plane to spiritual realm. Meditation is the key to

unlock many of the secrets of life. Meditation opens the door to intuitive knowledge and realms of eternal bliss. During meditation the mind becomes calm, serene and steady. A single idea alone occupies the mind.

Deep meditation cannot come in a day or a week or a month. You will have to struggle hard for a long time. Be patient. Be persevering. Be vigilant. Be diligent. Cultivate burning dispassion, fervent aspiration or an intense longing for Self-realization. Gradually you will enter into deep meditation and the superconscious state. All doubts will be cleared through meditation. A mysterious, inner voice will guide you. You will yourself find the way to place the next step in the rung of the Yogic ladder.

HOW TO MEDITATE

Meditate regularly in the early morning between 4 and 6 a.m. The mind is calm and refreshed at that time. The atmosphere also is calm. You will get good meditation. Have a separate meditation room or screen out a corner of a room for the purpose of meditation. If there is much strain in meditation, reduce the duration of each sitting. Do light meditation. Use your commonsense throughout your practice. Do not go to extremes. Stick to the golden medium or the middle path.

SAGUNA MEDITATION

Mind wants a concrete object for meditation in the beginning. Meditate in the beginning on a concrete form such as the image of your chosen deity, Siva, Krishna, Narayana, or Jesus, or Buddha. This

is Saguna meditation, or meditation on a divine form, with attributes. Think of His attributes such as omnipresence, perfection, purity, compassion, *etc.*, when you meditate on His form. Rotate your mind on His form from head to feet or from feet to head.

MEDITATION OF JESUS

Place a picture of Jesus in front of you. Sit in your favourite meditative pose. Concentrate gently on the picture, with eyes open, till you feel the strain. Rotate the mind on His serene face, beautiful locks, compassionate eyes, the cross on His chest, His lotus feet, on the spiritual aura around the head, and so on.

Think of His divine attributes such as love, magnanimity, mercy and forbearance. Think of the various phases of His interesting life, the 'miracles' He performed, the various extraordinary powers He possessed. Then close your eyes and try to visualize the picture. Repeat the same process again and again. (See *The Divine Life,* October, 1959, issue)

MEDITATION ON LORD HARI

Place a picture of Lord Hari in front of you. Sit in a meditative posture. Concentrate gently on the picture. Rotate the mind on His lotus feet, yellow silken robes, the golden garland set with diamonds, resting on His chest, His lustrous face, the gem-studded crown on the head, the disc in the right upper hand, the conch in the left upper hand, the mace in the right lower hand and the lotus in the left lower hand. Then close the eyes and try to visualize the picture in the same manner. Repeat the

process again and again. Devotees of Lord Buddha can meditate on His form in a similar way, with the association of his particular attributes.

MEDITATION ON 'OM'

Have a picture of ॐ in front of you. Concentrate gently on this picture with open eyes. Associate the ideas of eternity, infinity, the symbolism of creation, *etc.,* when you meditate on Om. The humming of bees, the sweet notes of the nightingale, the seven notes of the scale in music—all sounds are emanations of Om only. Om is the origin of scriptures. Imagine that Om is the bow, the mind is the arrow and God is the target. Aim at the target with great care and then, as the arrow becomes one with the target, you will become one with God. You can also recite Om while meditating. The short-accented Om burns all sins, the long-accented gives liberation, and the elongated bestows all psychic powers. He who chants and meditates upon this monosyllable (Om), meditates upon and chants all the scriptures of the world.

OTHER MEDITATIONS

Meditate mentally on the effulgence of the sun, or on the soft light of the moon, or on the twinkling light of the stars. Meditate on the magnificence of the ocean and its infinite nature. Then compare the ocean to the infinite nature of God, and the waves, foams and icebergs to the various names and forms of the world. Identify yourself with the ocean. Become silent.

Meditate on the Himalayas. Imagine that the

Ganges takes its origin in the snowy regions of Gomukh, flows through Rishikesh, Haridwar, Varanasi, and then enters the Bay of Bengal near Gangasagar. The Himalayas, the Ganges and the sea: these three thoughts only should occupy your mind. First take the mind to the snowy regions of the Himalayas, then along the Canges, and finally to the sea. Rotate the mind in this manner.

Gaze steadily on the formless air. Concentrate on air. Meditate on the all-pervading nature of air. This will lead to the realization of the nameless and formless God, the one, living Truth.

Watch the flow of breath. You will hear the sound "Soham"—"So" during inhalation and "Hum" during exhalation. Soham means "I am He." The breath reminds you of your identity with the Supreme Soul. You are unconsciously repeating Soham 21,600 times daily, at the rate of 15 Soham per minute. Associate the ideas of existence, knowledge, bliss, purity, peace, perfection, love, *etc.*, with Soham Mantra. Negate the body while repeating this and identify with the Supreme Soul.

Meditate on the Absolute. Think that there is a living, universal Power which underlies all names and forms. Associate the attributes of infinity, eternity, immortality, existence-consciousness-bliss absolute. In due course, the attributes will dissolve in pure, attributeless meditation.

EXPERIENCES IN MEDITATION

The feeling of elevation during meditation is a sign that you are going above body-consciousness.

When you practise concentration and meditation, you are bound to get various psychic experiences. Do not get lost in these experiences. Stick to your meditation, and aspire only for self-purification and God-realization. Do not bother about getting psychic powers. They are of no use to a sincere spiritual aspirant. There is no such thing as a miracle. When you know the cause, the miracle becomes an ordinary event. During meditation you will get rapture, ecstasy, thrill. When you get a flash of illumination, do not slacken your Sadhana. It will be a new experience of immense joy. Do not be unnecessarily alarmed when you go above body-consciousness. Do not stop your practice. The Lord will take care of you and guide you. Be bold. Look not back. March on, O hero !

A flash is a glimpse of Truth. This is not the whole experience. This is not the highest experience. Reach the Infinite, the acme or the final stage. During meditation, you will hear various sorts of Anahat sounds, *viz.*, that of conch, bell, flute, lute, drum, thunder, *etc.* You will see brilliant lights in the space between the eye-brows. They are of various types like pin point or like the sun, the moon or the stars. Sometimes you will behold coloured lights: green, blue, red, *etc.* They are due to the presence of different Tattwas at a particular time. Each element is associated with a different light. Ignore these lights and continue your meditation.

Sometimes you will have vision of saints, sages, tutelery deities, astral forms, landscape, mountains,

blue sky, beautiful gardens. Sometimes you may feel that you are floating in the air. Your astral body may get detached from the physical body. You will move about in the astral world. Those who have entered the first stage of meditation, will have a light body, sweet voice, glowing complexion, clarity of mind and scanty micturation and defaecation.

OBSTACLES IN MEDITATION

The chief obstacles in meditation are sleep, tossing of mind, the rising up of latent desires, lack of celibacy, spiritual pride, laziness and disease.

Company of worldly people, over-work, over-eating, self-assertive nature, are all obstacles to meditation.

Conquer sleep through control of breath, Asanas and light diet. Remove tossing of mind through control of breath, repetition of the Lord's name, austerity, concentration, *etc.* Destroy mundane desires through dispassion, discrimination, study of sacred books and holy company. Shun the company of worldly persons who always talk on sexual matters, money and worldly things. Observe moderation in diet. Obey the laws of health and hygiene. Pray to God. Have perfect ethical discipline. Keep the ideal always in view. The obstacles will be overcome.

Remember, meditation is not wishful thinking. It is positive, spiritual experience.

ETHICAL IDEALISM AND EDUCATION

(Sri Swami Sivananda)

Youth is the most precious wealth and treasure of the nation. Students are the important asset of the country, for leaders all over the land recognize that they are to guide the nation of tomorrow. The present generation of students is the potential that is to provide the leaders in all the different fields of national life in India of tomorrow. Education should, therefore, be given great importance and priority in all plans and programmes. For, it is education that has to mould and equip the students of today for the tasks they are to take up in the society of tomorrow.

How far is the education of the present day fulfilling this important function? This is the question that is engaging the anxious minds of leading men and women of India, who are deeply and genuinely concerned over the future of our national life. Is the present educational system proceeding upon right lines? Has it been successful in giving the right direction to the life and personality of the student of the present day? Is the university education of the present day effectively equipping the students for the responsible role of mature citizenship in the near future?

FORMATIVE PERIOD

The most precious period of a man's life is youth. Young age is the formative period in a human being's life. The moulding of one's nature and the making of personality and character take place in this period.

Thus it is that the greatest importance had been given to this stage of life by our cultural forebears in ancient India. In childhood, the young one unconsciously absorbs the influences of the environment. The growing child acquires and cultivates qualities of behaviour and conduct through unconscious imitation of persons surrounding him.

At a later stage, in youth, the young person begins to consciously and deliberately choose and develop habits of life and traits of character from examples and ideals that are before him or her. This process goes on progressively in the period of student life and leaves a lasting stamp upon the individual. Now, exactly what ideal does the present-day education place before the student in India?

AIM OF LIFE

In India, life has always been regarded as an invaluable and an important means for the attainment of a very high and noble end. Life has a far greater aim than merely managing to make some money, enjoying a few physical comforts and pleasures and luxuries and getting good name, fame and applause. The conception in Bharatavarsha has always been and shall for ever be that your life has for its grand purpose the achievement of an all-round perfection of body, mind and soul through an ideal life of virtue, goodness, purity, self-control, selflessness, kindness, service and fulfilment of one's true duty. Manly fulfilment of one's duty and bold and courageous idealism form the key-note of the ethical life conceived by the Indian genius. The recognition of this vital fact is essential for true success in

life, and upon it depends the ultimate welfare of the students of India.

Does the current system of education take cognizance of this most important factor? To what extent is the average student of the present-day colleges receive this inspiration and living impulse towards ethical evolution? Do the curriculum of today's universities have in them the requisite provision to fulfil this most indispensable and vital want? The answer to these weighty questions will serve to reveal the true value and worth of today's university or college studies. The answer is obvious. It comes from the very heads of the universities and educationists and the concerned leaders themselves.

EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

On all sides they admit without hesitation that the educational system of today is devoid of substantial culture. There is a despairing note in this frank confession. They feel that education, as it is today, is a failure, for it fails to provide to the student that most essential equipment of life, namely, true refinement, culture and character. But, fortunately, this very admission is a heartening sign. The very realization of the inadequacy of education has in it the seeds of hope and a revival of the true spirit and purpose behind education. The recognition of the defect by itself points to the remedy and indicates the possibility of a cure.

Education is not a filling-in of something from outside. It is a drawing-out from within of the highest and the best qualities inherent in the individual. It is the cultivation and development of these

worthy qualities and talents in an intelligent and rational way, so as to help build up a balanced personality. A great need is felt for the understanding and sympathetic management of the students upon the above lines, so as to equip them for noble and worthy citizenship in an India that has a high destiny to fulfil in the comity of nations of the present-day world civilization.

ETHICAL BASIS

The absence of an ethical basis to the student-life of this country has now been, more than ever before, brought forcibly to the attention of a problem-ridden leadership in India. The result of such a lack of ethical basis has become widely manifest in recent times, and the constructive thing to do is, not so much to try to lay blame anywhere, but rather to formulate a solution and rectify the error immediately.

The life of the student should be founded upon certain worthy principles. The students should be trained to be established in virtue. Education in schools and colleges should have an ethical basis. This is imperative. This is indispensable. This is a prime consideration of utmost importance. It is the foremost duty of those who have in their hands the solemn and sacred task of laying down the policy and the form of education in this awakened land. Upon this rests the welfare of our students, also the welfare of the nation. For, from among these student will emerge the leaders and administrators of future India.

'BREAD' OF LIFE

In the universities of today, the real need of the student is neglected. He is denied the "bread" of life and gets the "store" of dry booklore that is worthless to him, except to secure a degree or a diploma. This does not constitute education. The student is not merely a brain to be stuffed with a plethora of facts and figures and satistical information. He is an integral personality with the capacity to think, feel, know, choose and act. Head, heart and hand have to be harmoniously developed.

Above all, he is a conscious being, higher and superior even to his mind and intellect, which are but his instruments. He has the capacity in him for noble sentiments, sublime feelings and lofty ideals. He has admiration for the high and the heroic. He is instinctively attracted and drawn towards true greatness and grandeur. Every youth is a hero-worshipper at heart. This transforming element is inherent in the youth's make-up. It seeks self-expression. It needs to be given some tangible objective upon which it may be centered. This is a concrete ideal into which to grow.

It is to be in the nature of a well-conceived and lofty pattern of life, into which to cast the mould of their youthful thoughts and feelings, aspirations and ambitions and their life's activities. This will canalize their entire personality potential into positive and constructive lines and take it on towards true happiness, inward peace and a sense of real fullness, of achievement, success and supreme satisfaction resulting therefrom.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Such an urge towards an ideal pattern of living can be sustained only by a glad and voluntary adoption of a code of conduct conducive to its fulfilment. It is in the willing daily exercise of oneself on the lines of such a code of conduct that the zeal and inspiration towards ideal living will function and operate as a living force towards perfection of the personality. Virtue is not merely abstract. It is dynamic and should be given ample scope for active manifestation by an intelligently drawn-up daily programme of the students' activities. A rational time-table of activities, both daily as well as to cover the year, should be put as a concrete framework before the student.

This does not imply any rigidity of conception. It should be rationally conceived and suitable for adoption by all the wide range of varying temperaments that is likely to be found in the student-world. It is here that idealism will meet and blend with cordial harmony with realities. As its approach will be through basic factors that are universal to youth, and at the same time, keeping in view the special features conditioning the university-life of the Indian student, this pattern of life and code of conduct should serve to intelligently harmonize the ideal and the reality.

ROLE OF SANNYASINS

In India the problem of who it is that can effectively take up this important and delicate task of arousing the student's inherent love of the sublime,

the ideal and the good, does not present itself as an impossible task. There is naturally provision for this in the very structure of the Indian society. The conception of the Fourth Ashrama by our law-givers meets this need. The social ideology of this great land sought to it that every generation added its quota to a section in the society, whose sole function was to live a life dedicated to practising the highest ideal of virtue, of morality, Dharma and exemplary ethical conduct. These are the people of the fourth stage, the Sannyasins.

Theirs is this great and worthy task, fitted as they are for it by virtue of their voluntarily adopted ideals of dispassion, desirelessness, renunciation, self-control and worshipful, selfless service. So, then, the fire of inspiration the Sannyasins should kindle in the hearts of the students. Let them be given the scope to exercise this sacred privilege. Every facility should be provided by the authorities of universities, schools and colleges for the students to come into contact with truly worthy and dedicated monks of high calibre. The student-world has to come into touch with the living examples of Bharatavarsha's inner culture and ethical ideology. This would be far more powerful and dynamically efficacious than any moral instructions or study of textbooks on ethics.

EXEMPLARY TEACHERS WANTED

Equally important it is to note that professors and teachers and the staff of such educational institutions stand as much in need to acquire a personal knowledge of and to absorb the true spirit of the

ethical and spiritual ideals of our great culture. These teachers and professors are those who have the constant and continuous contact with the students. It is imperative, therefore, that they personally constitute ideal exemplars of the way of life which they wish the students to follow. They must, to some extent at least, personify in their own individual lives the virtues and the ideals which they wish their students to acquire and to grow into. This lacking, the students have but a poor Adarsh (example) before them and it is but natural that they fail to imbibe anything noble and sublime in their college or university career.

Even as in the sphere of the home the example of the parents exerts decisive influence upon the moulding of a child's personality, so, too, the example of the teachers or the professors exerts an unmistakable influence upon the personality of the student. If the printed page of the book imparts information to the student, the personal example of the teacher imparts life to their teaching. It is most essential that the educational world, as a whole, recognizes the deep and the far-reaching significance of what has been just stated. It holds the seeds of the ultimate welfare of the student-world as a whole.

SUMMING UP

In summing up, we have to state that there is great need for the imparting of ethical idealism to the youth of present-day India. The current educational system lacks this essential culture and has

badly failed in its task and let down the students. An ethical basis to education is the immediate and urgent need of this moment. The co-operation of competent spiritual leaders has to be availed to introduce this element in the college and university-life of the students.

Inspiring ideals, a code of moral conduct and a programme of life based upon noble principles, are indispensable requisites. The right type of literature should be made available to the student-world, so that it may serve as a fountain-source of inspiration for them to draw upon.

The ideal of virtue, goodness, true manliness and noble dutifulness form the very essence of dignified living and the secret of real happiness, achievement and success in life.

O youth of Bharatavarsha ! O student of the Holy Land ! Awake now and recognize this important factor. Shake off indifference and neglect. Your welfare and happiness lie in a life of virtue and goodness. This is in your hand. Arise. Tread the path of Dharma. Walk the way of truth, purity, selflessness and active goodness. Develop sublime character. Become ethically perfect. Shine as glorious examples to the modern world. Inspire the youths of nations abroad. Become worthy of the ideals of this great land. Pave the way to your success, prosperity, progress and perennial happiness. This is the time. Here is the opportunity. You have to do it now.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

Membership of the Divine Life Socety is open to all, irrespective of any distinction, the only qualifying condition being the practice of the ideals of truth, non-injury and purity. The Society is a non-sectarian institution, embodying in its perspective all the common, fundamental principles of all the religions of the world, or of spiritual life in general. The Society accords equal place of honour to all faiths and religious traditions and its members recognize no distinction between man and man, or harbour any disruptive sentiment on account of each other's traditional background or ancestral affiliation. An admission fee of Rs. 5, (or 10 shillings, or 1.50 US dollar) is charged to provide the new members with some spiritual literature by Sri Swami Sivananda, the Founder-President, while an annual membership fee of Rs. 2.50 (or 5 shillings or one US dollar) covers the subscription to *Wisdom-Light,* a monthly journal containing the teachings of Swamiji.

Any group of spiritually inclined individuals can open branches of the Divine Life Society, in consulation with the Headquarters, with the object of the dissemination of spiritual knowledge, promotion of goodwill, peace, amity and fellowship, and humanitarian service to the people.

Besides *The Divine Life* (annual subscription Rs. 4) and *Wisdom Light* (a journal for the members), the other periodicals published from the Headquarters are *Health and Long Life* (Rs. 3.75), *Yoga-Vedanta*—in Hindi—(Rs. 3.75), both of which are issued once in every month, and *Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy Weekly* (Rs. 6.50). The annual affiliation fee for the Branches of the Divine Life Society is Rs. 12, which meets the subscription to *The Divine Life, Wisdom Light* and *Branch Gazette,* the last being a means for getting to know about the activities of the different Branches of the Society.

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